

## Update for Board Meeting February 2008

Hello Friends,

Greetings from a wet and very hot South Africa. The temperatures are in the high 30's C most days and we have had a LOT of rain (twice our average for a season already) The roads are a mess, our vehicle is taking a bit of a beating. All is well with us, we have had some frustrations this last 6 weeks with the "rolling blackouts". South Africa has 3 main power stations, one of which is out of order. The other one provides power to neighboring countries like, Mozambique, Botswana, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. That leaves only one power station to supply the whole country. Our national power company Eskom is systematically switching off power to towns each day on a grid system. This means that across the country whole areas are without power for up to 8 hours. On a recent trip to Joburg we experienced a rolling blackout which meant the traffic lights didn't work. gas stations could not pump gas, stores closed to prevent shop lifting, etc etc. It's a nightmare! Our local hospital sent Piet home last Saturday. They said there was no power and only one doctor on duty so he should go home. He had cut his hand with an angle grinder and needed surgery urgently. Our local doctor has sutured his hand for the meantime but he has been sent to Pretoria for further treatment. We are told to expect the power outages for the next 5 years. Many people are purchasing generators.

The school registrations went very well. The children were so thrilled with their new uniforms, They could not stop touching them and wanted to keep trying on the shoes. Some children received school bags and what basic stationery we had. The excitement was huge on the first day of school. There were many tears of joy and also sadness. We were flooded with requests by children that were wearing old uniforms that are way too small, their white shirts were a dirty shade of grey. We helped several of these children. Our school team are still handing out the odd pair of shoes and uniforms. Purchasing all the uniforms was fun and games. The store personnel cringe when they see us coming. We load up basketfuls at a time. The cheaper stores don't have shopping carts, let alone ones with a slot for a coffee cup. Oh how we miss Starbucks!!

We have 26 children at the day care centre so far. Many mothers cannot afford to pay and we are making exceptions in certain instances.

The water situation is still critical. Our newest problem now is sewerage. The established part of town is pumping sewerage to the new part of town and the drains cant cope. Many of our families have been ill. The authorities are aware of the problem. We went to see them last week to stress the urgency of the situation.

Our college student registrations have proven to be a bit more tricky. Some students did not have the right grades for courses they were planning on taking. Across the country the math grades were dismal. Many students needed counseling and advice on suitable courses. We spent hours on the phone and internet getting information and registration forms for them. Eva and Helen will be studying office administration, Margaret and Amos will be studying Social Work, Dorcas is doing Human resources/Labour relations, Elizabeth is studying Tourism, Hendrik continues with his Magisterial Law and Simon is doing his 3<sup>rd</sup> year of a BA specializing in community development. We still have a few youngsters hoping for sponsorship but they have left things a bit late and we will have to see about getting them help.

On a personal note, I am still struggling with the loss of little Frans. This little boy really touched my life. Having buried 4 children in 4 weeks and then Granny Sina's grand daughter who died leaving 4 small children I have been very sad, I very seldom get depressed but this has been a tough few weeks for me. It saddens me tremendously to see children that should be flourishing and developing just struggling to survive each day battling with compromised immune systems. Nutrition for a vast majority of the children here is so poor. The food parcels we provide are like gold to the families that receive them. Grannies and Mothers weep when they receive food parcels. There are a lot of vulnerable children in Lesideng that do have homes and families but are so neglected and in many instances abused. These children really are a source of great concern to me. I am really praying for a viable solution to help these children. We are fast approaching the time when we will need a children's village to place these children in.

The shipment will be delivered to the farm on Tuesday, we are all going to be very busy sorting, unpacking and distributing.

I have many pictures and will be sending some back with John and Jim. We are looking forward very much to their trip.

Hamish is away for the first three weeks of February so I am running a bit at home. Between the rolling blackouts and long days I have fallen behind a bit with my correspondence. Please bear with me, I will catch up soon.

My very best wishes to you all,  
God Bless  
Terri

PS Wayne, Alida and Ruth have both been to see the doc recently. They are both fine, and send their love to you.

PS Steve, Elizabeth and the family had a wonderful time shopping for Christmas. Alfred has gone to Joburg to visit with his uncle. They all send their love to you and Joan and the children.